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What Was Mankind's Purpose?

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Mankind's Purpose

We often talk about our personal purpose, but what is mankind's purpose, as a whole? While that may seem like a question to which we can have no answer, the fact is that the Biblical text tells us the exact purpose of man. What is it? Are we fulfilling our purpose?

Mankind's Purpose As Stated By G-d

To answer those questions we must look to Genesis and the stories of man's creation. **Genesis 2:15 (https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=genesis%202:15&version=NIV)** gives us a clear answer as to man's purpose. "The L-rd G-d took the man and put him in the **garden of Eden (https://www.patheos.com/blogs/reclaimingthetruth/2023/07/eve-the-story-you-havent-heard/)** to work it and keep it." Mankind's purpose was to care for the Earth. We were made to be gardeners of G-d's creation. For this reason, G-d gave mankind domain over the animals and the right to eat of all that The Earth produced except for the fruit from the Tree of Life. We were responsible for the care of G-d's creation. Yet, when we violated the law against eating from The Tree Of Life, we demonstrated that we could not be trusted to care for G-d's creation, in the way he intended. Perhaps our lack of care for the garden and that tree is the true sin of Eden.

After Eden

Therefore, when I first read this text, I wondered if that purpose was done away with when man was cast out of the garden. If so, what was man's purpose after this? However, my continued reading leads me to believe man's purpose has never changed.

The curse G-d gives to man is that he should toil the Earth for his food and the labor will be hard. Therefore, man is still caring for the Earth, but now doing so is a work of labor rather than love. The Earth outside of Eden does not give up her riches easily. Yet, man is still the gardener. Further, during the flood G-d destroyed all mankind, except Noah and his family. Why did G-d save these humans? We see that G-d entrusted Noah with the job of saving the animals. Genesis **6:19-7:23 (https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+6%3A19-7%3A23&version=NIV)** assures us that Noah's purpose was to keep enough animals alive to repopulate the Earth.

> "9 You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you. 20 Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive. 21 You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them."22 Noah did everything just as God commanded him.7 The Lord then said to Noah, "Go into the ark, you and your whole family, because I have found you righteous in this generation. 2 Take with you seven pairs of every kind of clean animal, a male and its mate, and one pair of every kind of unclean animal, a male and its mate, 3 and also seven pairs of every kind of bird, male and female, to keep their various kinds alive throughout the earth. 4 Seven days from now I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights, and I will wipe from the face of the earth every living creature I have made."5 And Noah did all that the Lord commanded him.6 Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters came on the earth. 7 And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives entered the ark to escape the waters of the flood. 8 Pairs of clean and unclean animals, of birds and of all creatures that move along the ground,"

This is later confirmed in **Genesis 8:17 (https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+8%3A17&version=NIV)**. "17 Bring out every kind of living creature that is with you—the birds, the animals, and all the creatures that move along the ground—so they can multiply on the earth and be fruitful and increase in number on it." G-d's first concern after the flood was repopulating his garden.

G-d Repents That He Harmed The Earth

> Finally, after the flood in verse 8:21, we see that G-d repents.
> "21 The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: "Never again will I curse the ground because of humans, even though[a (https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+8%3A21&version=NIV#fen-NIV-205a)] every inclination of the human heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done."

Notice G-d does not repent that they have destroyed man. Rather, G-d repents that he cursed The Earth for man's sake and swears never to do so again. The only thing G-d ever repented for was destroying The Earth and its creatures. G-d's first love and concern is the garden, not the gardener. Mankind's purpose is to care for G-d's beautiful creation of Earth.

Mankind's Purpose Has Not Been Fulfilled

We failed at that task in Eden, and, I dare say, we are still failing. Pollution and greenhouse gasses are killing the land we were made to protect. T**wo-thirds of the world's wildlife has been lost in the last 50 years. (https://www.npr.org/2020/09/10/911500907/the-world-lost-two-thirds-of-its-wildlife-in-50-years-we-are-to-blame)**We have murdered those animals we were saved to protect.

Man is not the gardener we were called to be, and thus we are a failure as a species. We often ask, why is the world so evil? The answer, I believe, lies in our failure to fulfill our God-given purpose. If we wish to again enter an Eden-like existence, a land without trouble, we must become the gardeners we were meant to be. We must return to protecting G-d's land and animals.

For our greatest sin is not any of the things we debate. It is not homosexuality. It is not abortion. Our greatest sin is failing at the purpose G-d gave us, which is to protect the Earth. G-d did not lie to Eve in the garden. Surely, our lack of care for G-d's creation as they ordered is the sin that will kill us. As the Earth dies, so do we. There is no need for a gardener once the garden is dead. Nor is there anything to sustain the gardener's life once the garden has died. If we fail to fulfill our purpose, we as a species perish. Thus, I beg you to return to our original purpose. Save The Earth.

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